S.C.88.

A

SERMON

PREACHED at

St. *PAUL*'s, DEPTFORD, KENT,

On JUNE 24, 1752.

Before a Select Number of GENTLEMEN,

Who ſtile themſelves

The Order of *UBIQUARIANS.*

K.

By *FARMERY MALTUS*, L. L. B.

LECTURER of St. *Mary Magdalen, Bermondſey.*

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Finally, Brethren, whatſoever Things are true, whatſoever Things are honeſt, whatſoever Things are juſt, whatſoever Things are pure, whatſoever Things are lovely, whatſoever Things are of good Report; if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praiſe, think of theſe Things.

THAT Chriſtianity has a natural Tendency to promote the temporal, as well as eternal Happineſs of Mankind is evident, not only from thoſe many particular Exhortations interſpers'd throughout the Goſpel to the Practice of ſuch Duties, as are inſtrumental to the Peace, and well-being of Society; but alſo from thoſe many excellent Rules of Chriſtian Behaviour, which the Apoſtle has drawn into a Compendium in the Words I have now read to you. Words ſo full and comprehenſive, that they extend to every Part of our Deportment, either as it reſpects ourſelves or our Neighbours: There being no Duty, which we owe to ourſelves or others, deduc'd either from the Light of Reaſon, or inculcated by Revelation, but what is ſumm'd up and included in them. The Man of God muſt be tho-

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roughly perfect in all good Works, exact and punctual in diſcharging the ſeveral Offices flowing from the ſeveral Relations he ſtands in: In a Word, whatſoever is good either in its Nature or Quality, whatſoever is truly commendable or praiſe-worthy, he muſt follow after, and exemplify in his Practice. By this means the Primitive Chriſtians, when they were accuſed of Seditions and Factions in the State, juſtified themſelves: They appealed to their Lives and Actions, the Doctrines and Precepts of that Religion they profeſſed, as they were directed and influenced by *them*. By this means they recommended Chriſtianity to others; and by an uniform and ſteady Practice of all publick and private Duties, and in ſpite of all Oppoſition and Perſecution recommended it to the Countenance and Protection of Kings and Princes. And happy would it be, both for the whole Community, as well as every particular Member of it, if the ſame ſocial Virtues, that adorned the Lives of the firſt Profeſſors of the Goſpel, were ſtill look'd upon as the diſtinguiſhing Qualifications of a true Chriſtian: If that Openneſs and Simplicity of Behaviour, that Love of Juſtice and Integrity, that Hatred of Fraud and Villany, that Purity and Chaſtity, that univerſal Goodneſs and Benevolence, that were ſo eminently diſplay'd in the firſt Ages of the Church, were ſtill the Principles and Groundwork of our Actions.

In Order to this, I ſhall endeavour to enlarge upon theſe Rules of the Apoſtle to the due regulating of our Conduct, which cannot be ſuch as becomes Chriſtians, unleſs it do ſome Way or other promote Virtue,

Virtue, Sincerity and Purity of Manners, ſevere Juſtice, real Charity, and ſolid Diſcretion in all our Undertakings and Employments, in all our Amuſements and Diverſions.

After which I ſhall cloſe the whole with an Application ſuitable to the Occaſion of our preſent Meeting.

I begin with the firſt Rule of the Apoſtle,

Whatſoever Things are true, real or ſincere, think on theſe Things.

There is nothing more ſuitable to the Nature of Man than plain and open Truth. His Mind is continually upon the Wing after it, and uneaſy and reſtleſs till he obtain it. And ſince through the Strength and Prevalency of his Paſſions, and the Weakneſs of his intellectual Faculties, he is often liable to Error, even under the cleareſt Light, and ſureſt Principles, how injurious muſt it be to him to have his Underſtanding fill'd with falſe Images of Things, and thick Prejudices, ſo ſtrongly interwoven in him, that they ſhall ſeem to be of the ſame Growth with his Soul? How difficult is it for one of ſuch a prepoſſeſs'd Mind, ever to receive any Impreſſions of Things real, and fit to be confided in? Let the Mind of Man be always reverenc'd as a moſt ſacred Receſs, where only Truth and Goodneſs ſhould dwell, and in which nothing, but what is ſound and ſubſtantial, ſhould be repoſited, nothing but what may be ſerviceable to moral

moral or religious Wiſdom. How, eſpecially, circumſpect ought Men to be in all Matters of Religion, where Fraud and Artifice ought never to be endur'd; for the plain Truths of Religion will ſhift for themſelves, and are never known to fail, but when Men undertake to prop them with their additional Cunning. We know how Chriſtianity broke thro' all the Arts and Policies of the Heathen Empire, not only by its paſſive Courage and meek Subjection, but by its ſolid Plainneſs and active Integrity; and if Men think to render it more ſecure by guarding it with Subtilty, and nice Diſtinctions, they are miſtaken, they only weaken it, and make it ſuſpected, whilſt they labour to change the Counſels of God into the Imagination of Man.

Here you have the Things that are true; think therefore on theſe Things, and not only on theſe, but as the Apoſtle goes on, think alſo on whatſoever Things are honeſt, or, as the *Greek* Word imports, whatſoever Things are grave, venerable, or decent. Things that may raiſe the Eſteem of the Perſon, and create a Reverence and Value in others for him. It is a good Rule that is laid down by ſome Moraliſts, that in our moſt familiar Converſe, we ſhould often reflect on the Dignity and Prerogative of Man, that our Thoughts might be excited to noble Deſigns, and that we may do or ſay nothing that is below the Excellency of that Nature we carry, and always pay a proportionable Reſpect to thoſe that bear the ſame Image with us: And this may be called the general Decorum of Life; againſt

againſt which, all Exceſſes and baſe Compliances do immediately offend. But we, that are Chriſtians, are able to carry this Rule higher, by carrying our Thoughts beyond the preſent Dignity of our Nature, to the Expectation of that Glory to which, thro' Faith and Obedience it may be advanced. Let us think what Gravity and Seriouſneſs becomes thoſe, who acknowledge themſelves to be always in the Preſence of God, always contending for a Crown, and to be endu'd with Souls capable of Thoughts and Affections, that immediately relate to thoſe Concerns that are infinite and eternal. And altho' we are not bound to keep up theſe Reflections in their full Solemnity, but may ſometimes unbend to an innocent Refreſhment, yet ought their Authority and Awe be ſo habitual to us, as to put a Check to all Extravagancies and Exceſſes; for Man was not made for Levity, but for grave and weighty Affairs; and only ſo much Recreation is allowed him as may fit him for more important Duties. Levity of Carriage and Behaviour are generally look'd upon by others with Scorn and Contempt: Hence it comes to paſs, that ſo many complain that they are ſlighted and diſregarded, that they are not lov'd, and no wonder, when they have nothing in them that is lovely. Whereas there is ſuch a Gracefulneſs and Comelineſs in the Words and Actions of good Men, as commands and extorts Reſpect; they are no ſooner ſeen but admir'd, and that too, even by thoſe, that are Enemies to their Virtue. That therefore we may be truly venerable in the Eye of others, let our Converſation be diveſted of all prepoſterous Affectation:

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for whatever is unnatural is upon that very Account unbecoming. Let there be no Moroſeneſs, Severity, or Statelineſs in our Carriage, but all Harmony, Kindneſs and Compliance; and above all things let us ſtand at the greateſt Diſtance from, and avoid all Immorality and Turpitude: But theſe Things I need not mention to you, your Statutes being ſo wiſely calculated for the Prevention of all ſuch Indecencies. Thus are we to think of whatſoever Things are venerable.

The next Thing recommended by the Apoſtle, is, whatſoever Things are juſt.

The antient Commonwealth of *Rome* has been deſervedly admired thro' all Chriſtian Ages for its civil Wiſdom, its Juſtice and Equity; and yet their great Orator and Civilian has confeſs'd, that they had not any expreſs Image of the true Law, and ſincere Juſtice among them, but only ſome faint Reſemblance of it, and that the Original was to be expected only from Nature and Truth. And behold, we have receiv'd it from the God of Truth and Nature, who came to make us more like Doves than Serpents, more juſt than cunning; more upright and ſincere Deſpiſers of the World, not more ſhrewd deceitful Adorers of it, than *Jews* and *Pagans*; who came to root out all Covetouſneſs from Men's Minds, wherein the Strength of Injuſtice lies, to leſſen their Eſteem for temporal Advantages, to acquaint them with the Riches of his Mercy, to tell them of Treaſures worth all their Induſtry and Care,

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to inſpire them all with the moſt generous Principles of doing all the good that lies in their Reach, and of copying after his Example, who went about doing Good, and in whoſe Mouth there was found no Guile. And nothing ſeem'd a greater Care with the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, than that Men might adorn their Chriſtian Profeſſion, by ſhewing the admirable Influence it had upon them, in thoſe lawful States and Callings in which it found them engag'd. Wherefore all thoſe may be ſaid to offend highly againſt Chriſtian Converſation, who make it their Buſineſs to wrong their Neighbours by crafty and ſpecious Pretences, who think they may take the Advantage of another's Weakneſs, and make their own Profit the Meaſure of other Men's Rights; whereas the Juſtice of a Chriſtian ought always to be temper'd and accompanied with ſome Degrees of Chriſtian Charity. And we ſhould ever remember that we are not only Members of this Society, but of one Blood by Redemption, that we are all Children of the ſame Father by Adoption, Heirs of the ſame Hopes and Promiſes; and that in theſe little Societies here on Earth, it nearly concerns us, that we no way unfit ourſelves for that everlaſting Society, which we expect hereafter.

But to proceed, the next Thing I am to exhort you to from the Words of my Text, is the Practice of Purity; *whatſoever Things are pure*; the Meaning of which Words is, that we ſhould ſtudy to be pure, chaſte and temperate both in our Hearts and Lives, avoiding all Exceſſes, all Lewdneſs and Senſu-

ality; and if the Apoſtle thought it convenient in that Age of Strictneſs, Severity and Devotion, to put the Chriſtians in Mind of this, I am ſure, it is not only convenient, but neceſſary to do it in this Age of ours, when Luxury and Debauchery, and all Manner of Vices, that are contrary to the Purity here recommended, are grown to that Height among us, that we ſeem to defy God Almighty by our impudent Practice of them, and to provoke him to give us up to Deſtruction. Wherefore, let me beſpeak all here preſent in the Words of the Apoſtle, Dearly Beloved, I beſeech you as Strangers and Pilgrims to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts which war againſt the Soul. I beſeech you as you have any Honour for our Lord and Maſter, as you have any Regard to a Preſervation of a Senſe of Religion in your Minds, as you have any Concern for your Health, your Families, or for your Eſtates, as you have any Reſpect to the Publick, that Effeminacy, Debauchery, and Diſeaſes may not be entail'd upon your Poſterity: Laſtly, as you love your own Souls, and hope ever to ſee the Face of God in Heaven, learn to live ſoberly, learn to live chaſtely, learn to practice Purity and Temperance in all your Converſation. I know theſe Things are made ſlight Matters of by too many amongſt us: But aſſure yourſelves God will not account them ſo: It is very certain he will not if we may believe his Word.

Again, whatſoever Things are lovely, courteous and obliging, ought to be promoted in our common Converſation. This Rule takes in all the lower Acts of Civility,

Civility, whereby a Man is render'd moſt acceptable to his Company, and by which he does not only avoid thoſe greater Scandals which may provoke, but thoſe leſſer Indecencies which may offend. 'Tis a prudent Obſervation of thoſe ceremonious Addreſſes, that Place and Time, and Cuſtom, and the Quality of Perſons, do require a Readineſs to give every one their due Reſpect, and rather more than leſs. 'Tis ſuch a Guard upon all our Behaviour and Diſcourſes, as ſuffers no Contempt of others, no Inſolvency, no Anger or Affectation to appear. And give me Leave to obſerve a little further, that Converſation, when it is truly genteel and complaiſant, is only an obliging Scene of Kindneſs and Modeſty, a peculiar *Shine* of virtuous Inclinations, or making good Nature moſt viſible, grateful and lovely. And altho' this cannot be ſo well effected without ſome faſhionable Ceremonies, yet when all is done, ſolid Virtue is the moſt laſting Ornament of Converſation, and an hearty Plainneſs has many Privileges allow'd it in Company, which, without it, is denied to the moſt honourable in Station or Deſcent. Where there is ſubſtantial Honeſty, all Things are in a Manner becoming, and where that is wanting, the fineſt Language of Affection, is but Emptineſs and Diſſimulation; and the moſt exquiſite Addreſs only the hiding of a real Defect. I proceed to the laſt Head of Advice that is given in my Text. The Apoſtle having recommended whatever is true, grave, juſt, pure and lovely to the Purſuit of Chriſtians, leaves off to meddle with Particulars, and ſums up the reſt of his Advice in Generals. And that Sum comes to this, that, as we are Chriſtians, we ſhould not only take Care of the fore-

mentioned Things, but ſhould make it our Buſineſs to improve ourſelves in every other Sort of Virtue, nay, in every other Sort of Thing that is Praiſe-worthy, or that is well eſteem'd of among Mankind, ſo that really it ſhould be the Endeavour of our Lives to render ourſelves as excellent, and as exemplary for all Sorts of amiable Qualities as it is poſſible for Men to be in this World. This I take to be the full Meaning of thoſe Expreſſions that follow in my Text, *whatſoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praiſe.* And now, Brethren, ſee from hence what your Obligations are, you that have ſuch a glorious Light vouchſafed you; ſuch invaluable Promiſes, ſuch mighty Aſſiſtances made over to you by the Goſpel of Chriſt: You muſt in Reaſon imagine, that in Return of theſe great Advantages, great Things are expected from you. It will not ſatisfy your Engagements, that you do believe and profeſs the Goſpel, that you do no Wrong to your Neighbours, that you are neither given to Lewdneſs or Debauchery; (tho' yet even theſe as the World goes are very great Things, and could all Men, that profeſs Chriſtianity, truly ſay this of themſelves, we ſhould ſee Heaven upon Earth.) But your Chriſtianity obliges you to aſpire after greater Things; you muſt get yourſelves poſſeſs'd of the whole Circle of Virtues; you muſt be kind and charitable, as well as juſt and honeſt; you muſt be modeſt, meek and humble, as well as temperate and chaſte. Nay, not only ſo, but you are to labour after all theſe ſeveral Virtues in the full Latitude and Extent of them, even to that Degree, that every Thing which hath but the Appearance of Evil is to be avoided by you. You are not only to

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abſtain from Acts of Injuſtice, but even from doing a hard Thing to any one. You are not only to keep yourſelves within the known Temperance and Chaſtity, but to avoid all thoſe Things that border upon the Vices oppoſite thereunto, and ſo as to all other Inſtances: If a Thing be of ill Report, and looks infamouſly to the ſober Part of Mankind, why that very Conſideration is enough to deter us from the Practice of it: For you are to recommend your Religion to all the Men in the World, by all the Ways that are poſſible. In a Word, you are to endeavour to be as free from Blame in your whole Converſation, as you poſſibly can, and not only ſo, but to be as good and to do as much good as your Circumſtances will allow you. This now is to be an *Ubiquarian* indeed, by thus endeavouring, you walk worthy of that high Calling wherewith you are called, and you do, as the Apoſtle adviſes, adorn the Doctrine of God in all Things; and happy, extreamly happy, are they that do thus, for great is their Reward; great even in this World, in the comfortable Approbation of good Men, in the ſolid Peace and Aſſurance of God's Favour which they here enjoy, and which indeed far exceeds all the Bleſſings that the Earth can afford; but exceedingly great in the Life to come, when Jeſus Chriſt ſhall come with all the Powers of Heaven, to do Honour to thoſe, that have thus honoured him here. Let us then be perſwaded, not only to think theſe Things reaſonable in themſelves, but alſo to put them in Execution: for they are not only our Duty, but our Intereſt alſo. For do we deſire the outward Enjoyments of this World, what Way ſo likely to obtain theſe, as by the

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Goodneſs of our Lives to engage God on our Side, who is the Giver of them, nay, and to engage Men too, who will hereby be invited more than by any other Thing elſe to love and aſſiſt us. Or do we, like wiſer Men, deſire thoſe inward Enjoyments of Contentment of Mind, of Fearleſsneſs of Dangers, Afflictions and Sickneſs; nay, even Death itſelf, of a Mind undiſturb'd by Luſts and Paſſions, of Peace and Conſcience, and that yet more deſirable Peace of God which paſſeth all Underſtanding. Where are all theſe to be found, but in the Exerciſe of theſe Graces, where but in the Religion of him, who both had them all in himſelf in the higheſt Degree, and had Power to beſtow them on whomſoever he ſhould pleaſe, and has actually promis'd them to all his faithful Followers and Diſciples. To ſay all at once, do we deſire to avoid everlaſting Miſery, and to obtain eternal Happineſs. There is but one Way of doing this, that is, by becoming Holy in all Manner of Converſation, by perfecting Holineſs in the Fear of God, by being Juſt and Honeſt in all our Dealings and Intercourſes with Men, pure in our Affections, and Patterns of all Virtue, and ſo rendering ourſelves meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. There will come a Day, believe me there will, (but why do I ſay believe me? Believe your own Reaſon and Conſcience, nay, even God himſelf, who cannot poſſibly deceive you) when God ſhall judge the World in Righteouſneſs, and give to every Man according to his Deeds; to them who, by patient Continuance in well doing, have ſought for Glory, Honour, Immortality, and eternal Life: But to them who have been contentious, and

have

have not obeyed the Truth, but obeyed Unrighteouſneſs; Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguiſh upon every Soul of them. A Day of Darkneſs and Gloomineſs, when Sinners ſhall be afraid, and the Hypocrites ſhall be ſurpris'd with Fearfulneſs. When they ſhall ſay to the Mountains and Rocks fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that ſitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb, for the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who ſhall be able to ſtand? May theſe Conſiderations take ſuch deep Root in our Hearts and Minds, that they may be productive of much Fruit in our Lives, that Truth and Juſtice may be eſtabliſh'd amongſt us upon the ſureſt Foundations, that Purity and Modeſty may be look'd upon as the Excellency of a Man, and Virtue as his real Perfection; and in a Word, that thoſe Virtues, which are an Ornament of Grace to our Heads here, may become unto us a Crown of eternal Glory hereafter.

Grant this, we beſeech thee, O Father, of thine infinite Mercy, thro' the Merits of thy Son Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt due, all Honour, Praiſe, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, both now and ever. Amen.

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